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UNH Intercollegiate Dressage Association Team Competes In Nationals April 25 - 27

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UNH Equine Program

April 22, 2008

DURHAM, N.H. - The University of New Hampshire's Intercollegiate Dressage Association (IDA) team has won the northeast regional championships for the second time. Five riders from the team will compete in the IDA national championships this weekend, April 25 - 27, 2008, at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Mass.

Five student riders will represent UNH at the national championships: Caroline McCarthy, a junior finance major from Geneva, N.Y.; Hillary Feldman, a junior pre-vet major from East Greenwich, R.I.; Kimberly Guyer, a junior pre-vet major from Northborough, Mass.; Casey Hoatson, a sophomore occupational therapy major from York, Maine; and Lisa Moskal, a freshman equine science major from New Haven, Conn. Students compete individually at their levels and as a team.

For more information on the Intercollegiate Dressage Association national championships, go to www.teamdressage.com.

Dressage is a sport that can be likened to ballet for horse and rider; the famous Lippizan stallions of the Spanish Riding School of Vienna are an example of dressage at its highest level. Riders strive to systematically develop and improve the horse's strength, flexibility, balance, gait and movement to create a harmonious partnership between horse and rider, with invisible communication.

Intercollegiate dressage competition has the added challenge that the rider must perform on an unfamiliar horse. Each college takes a turn hosting a show and provides all the horses for the riders of every team. In a true test of skill, tact and sensitivity, riders draw horses at random and have just 10 minutes to get to know the horse and try to establish a harmonious relationship with the animal.

"This was our strongest season ever," said Sarah Hamilton, director of the UNH Equine Program and coach of the IDA team. "We won five of the seven regional competitions, and not only did our team win the northeast regional championships, students from UNH won the regional championships in three of the four individual divisions."

Hamilton notes that competitors ride several hours each week in addition to practice time, and that becoming an effective dressage rider can take years. The intercollegiate dressage season begins in September, breaks from December through February, then resumes in March.

The UNH Equine Program offers a bachelor's degree in animal science that allows students to concentrate in one of the following three tracks: equine industry and management, therapeutic riding, or equine science. Classes include stable management, horse care, teaching, training, horsemanship, conformation, equine diseases, equine sports medicine, reproduction, nutrition and horse trials management. The Equine Program also has an active riding program which concentrates in dressage and eventing and two equestrian teams, the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association Team (hunt seat) and the Intercollegiate Dressage Association Team (dressage). Both teams had their best seasons ever this year. UNH hosts two nationally recognized horse trials and two nationally recognized dressage shows each year. UNH's therapeutic riding program is recognized as a North American Riding for the Handicapped Association Premier Operating Center. UNH has an active Horsemen's Club, as well as study abroad programs that include a week-long trip to Portugal for the concentrated study of classical dressage.

For more information on the UNH IDA team, go to

<http://www.unh.edu/horsemensclub/IDA.html>. For information on the Equine Program, go to www.equine.unh.edu.

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Photograph available to download:

<http://www.unh.edu/news/img/equine/dressage.JPG>

Caption: Caroline McCarthy, a University of New Hampshire junior from Geneva, N.Y., will compete at the team and individual levels at the Intercollegiate Dressage Association national championships April 25 - 27, 2008, at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Mass.

